

Absolutes...
that don't work. :-/

- **Sentences with linking verbs don't work because there is no motion to enhance - you are forced to bring new info into the sentence and that will throw it off.**

1. **Core sentence:** The ocean looked beautiful.
Absolute + Core: Water swaying calmly, the ocean looked beautiful.
2. **Core sentence:** The morning sky was bright.
Absolute + Core: Sun rising quickly, the morning sky was bright.
3. **Core sentence:** The barn was very old.
Absolute + Core: The barn, wood rotting slowly, was very old.
4. **Core sentence:** The garden looked amazing.
Absolute + Core: The garden, plants growing wonderfully, looked amazing.
5. **Core sentence:** It was peaceful outside.
Absolute + Core: Snow falling heavily, it was peaceful outside.
6. **Core sentence:** It was a perfect Christmas Eve.
Absolute + Core: It was a perfect Christmas eve, small snowflakes whirling around the town.
7. **Core sentence:** The parents watched the performance.
Absolute + Core: The parents watched the performance, their daughter performing elegantly.

The gymnast was on the beam, carefully
walking to the other side.

Issue: This is THE most common absolute error. This is not a blank-blanking because there needs to be a NOUN + -ING structure. “Carefully” is an adverb.

Swiftly shooting down the river, the raft
bounced and bucked.

Issue: Same as the last one. “Swiftly” is an adverb.

The bank robbers, hurriedly picking the
lock, tried to open the safe.

Issue: Nope. “Hurriedly” is an adverb.

He spoke, the boy's unwavering voice
gave everyone confidence.

Issue: This is a comma splice. "He spoke" is a sentence. The part in magenta is, too. The underlined words are not a noun and an -ing word. "Boy's" is an adjective. "Unwavering" is an adjective too.

The rain, which was like a rock speeding
down, touched the ground.

Issue: The blank-blanking here appears in a different kind of dependent clause that doesn't work. Never use words like "which" in your absolutes.

The family walked into the restaurant,
the smell appealing.

Issue: “Smell appealing” is an awkward absolute to add. More importantly, it sounds like the family’s smell is appealing for some reason.

The bell rang, kids running with excitement.

Issue: Two topics. The bell has nothing to do with the kids. The revision has to enhance or modify what's in the existing sentence.

The phone buzzed, while the
butterflies in her stomach were
fluttering.

Issue: This one is sort of like the one earlier that has “which” in the absolute. It’s a different kind of dependent clause, one that does not work and is not an absolute. Notice the verb phrase “were fluttering” as well. That’s not part of an absolute.

There community advertising proved,
it was a great product.

Issue: First off, it's the wrong "there." It should be "their." In this sentence, "community advertising" is the subject of the sentence. The rest of the sentences is flawed and doesn't work because of that. You can also tell just by how awkward it sounds.

Her brain calculating everything,
proved she was smart.

Issue: Same as the last one. “Her brain calculating everything” is a (really awkward and not totally correct) subject of the sentence. The rest of the sentences is flawed and doesn’t work because of that. You can also tell just by how awkward it sounds.

The waves were rough, boats tossing
harshly.

Issue: The revision adds new information and does not enhance the core sentence.

Gymnasts sweating rapidly, conditioning
was finally over.

Issue: Same as the last one. Two topics.

Wind blowing severely, the brown, red,
and orange leaves fell from the trees.

Issue: Two topics. Revision has to enhance the core.

They ran away, voices replaying in their
minds.

Issue: Two topics. The voices have nothing to do with the running.

Nathan's car crashed, stuff flying
everywhere.

Issue: This one is close, but the car crashing and the stuff flying are just different enough that they don't work well together.

John is annoying, in fact, he is the most
annoying kid in school.

Issue: Absolutes should modify something in the core sentence and add motion to it. This one does not do that. “Most annoying” is not a proper blank-blanking because “annoying” is an adjective, not an -ing verb, in this particular case. This is also a comma splice.

Smith is athletic, he is beating everyone
he races.

Issue: This is a comma splice, too. The part in magenta has to be a dependent clause.

The cat sat in the house, its skin
wrinkling on the carpet.

Issue: Two topics...and SUPER awkward. Why is that cat's skin wrinkling?! <cringe>